

HACC Small Groups 2018 Fall Cycle
Series: Soul Detox | Part #2: Worry

“Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia...When we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn – conflict on the outside, fears within” (2 Corinthians 2:12-13 and 7:5).

- The missionary who suspended his work in Troas was the apostle Paul. He grew so worried about the problems in the work in Corinth that he couldn't focus in on the possibilities in Troas.
- Paul had expected Titus to meet him in Troas with updates and, he hoped, with better news. But Titus never showed up, and Paul couldn't concentrate on the work at hand because of fears within and uncertainties afar.
- This shows the human side of a biblical hero. Paul battled “fears within” as acutely as he battled “conflicts on the outside.”
- As Paul prayerfully searched his books and parchments, pouring over the Hebrew Scriptures, I believe he developed a treatment protocol for his worry and anxiety. As a physician of the soul, he knew how to wisely self-medicate with biblical truth.
- The day came when he was ready to share his method of waging war on worry, and he passed it along to us in the letter of Philippians.
- Paul wrote about his crippling tendency to worry and be anxious in 2 Corinthians 2:13, sometime around AD 55. Seven or so years later, in about AD 62, he told the Philippians about a strategy for overcoming crippling worry and anxiety from our lives.

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, what is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:4-9).

Discussion

1. The Practice of rejoicing

- What is the difference between happiness and joy?
What makes rejoicing in the Lord a special celebration?
- Do we have an option as to whether or not we can rejoice?

- What are some ways we can choose to rejoice in the Lord in spite of the difficult experiences we sometimes encounter?

When Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians he was in prison. Paul learned to be joyful despite the heat, despite the cold, despite the chains, despite the limitations, despite everything. His attitude was: "Praise the Lord anyways!"

2. The Practice of Gentleness

- What do you think is the Biblical meaning of the term "gentleness?"
Can you think of any Biblical examples when people exercised gentleness?
- How can our behavior without gentleness be harmful to us?
- How is being gentle different from being passive?

Gentleness pleases the Lord: *"Your beauty...should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight" (1 Peter 3:3-4).*

3. The Practice of Nearness

- How does the knowledge of God's nearness to us spare us from worry?

Let's be reminded of the challenges Paul faced: a disrupted life bound up in legal challenges, probable imprisonment, and waves of financial and physical strain.

4. The Practice of Prayer

- What is the difference between worry and concern?
How do we prevent concern from becoming worry?
- How does prayer help alleviate worry?

6. The Practice of Thinking

- How does our thought life affect how we feel?
- What does the Bible say about how we should think?

"Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy – think about such things."

7. The Practice of Discipleship

- Discipleship happens within the context of community and relationship.
How does participation within a community of faith help to alleviate worry?

8. The Practice of Peace

- Does having the peace of God mean we are immune from worry?
- How does the practice of God's peace help us through life's difficult situations?

Conclusion and Prayer